



Salah Daris

HALLMARKS 1992

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Ode to Penstaff

upon the first word spoken
the barriers begin to melt
causing the senses to be awaken
and all emotions to be felt

together for a common love found
discovering we need not utter a sound

Joelle Herr

Trust

In life there is one time of ultimate trust
A child believes in her dreams
In a dream fear becomes courage
The courage to wake up.

Kristin Triplett

I can recall one of the family's first vacations and my first experience with sands along the ocean shore. The memory of this beautiful beach is vividly restored in my mind through a photograph. My recollections of this moment in time would probably be lost forever in the depths of my childhood, without this last vestige. I see myself as a young girl maybe four or five, playing with a young boy of my same age. We've never met before this encounter, but we share a common interest in constructing sandcastles. I am a submissive girl in this picture, we build the castle his way and I am comfortable with that. He wants it to be tall. He says the sand must be molded with castle shaped molds, he provides the molds. He sends me off to the ocean's shore with his bucket, he says we need water to wet the sand. In my sweetness of spirit and childish tenderness I do exactly as he requests. We got along well that day. I needn't wonder why.

I've grown into a young woman now with a mind of my own. I've run into a young boy or two since then and we've built towers in the sky, only because I made no assumptions. I never went by the mold ... and I never carried the bucket.

Jessica Lovett



Tricia Shalibo



Emily Lloyd

“The Moon is so bright...”

“The Moon is so bright I can see your eyes.”

Mine looked into his
as these words slid from his mouth and
bounced off the sharp, cold air.

“The Moon is so bright I can see your lips.”

He cracked a smile
as I thought of mine touching his.
I cleared my mind
knowing his thoughts to be the same.

“The Moon is so bright I can see your face.”

I turned from him
as I studied the misty white clouds
escaping from my mouth.
His warm hand touched my chin
pulling it around.
His brown, piercing eyes were softened
by the surrounding darkness.

“The Moon is so bright I can see your Soul.”

My Soul?
I shifted by body back from his,
my eyes darting from one grave to another.
My Soul?
I felt his eyes burning through my flesh,
searching for what was not there.

“The Moon is so bright I can see your Soul..”

My heart fluttered.
My body shook
My hand loosened its grip as I
collapsed into a world of Darkness
where there is no Moon.

Joelle Herr

Untitled

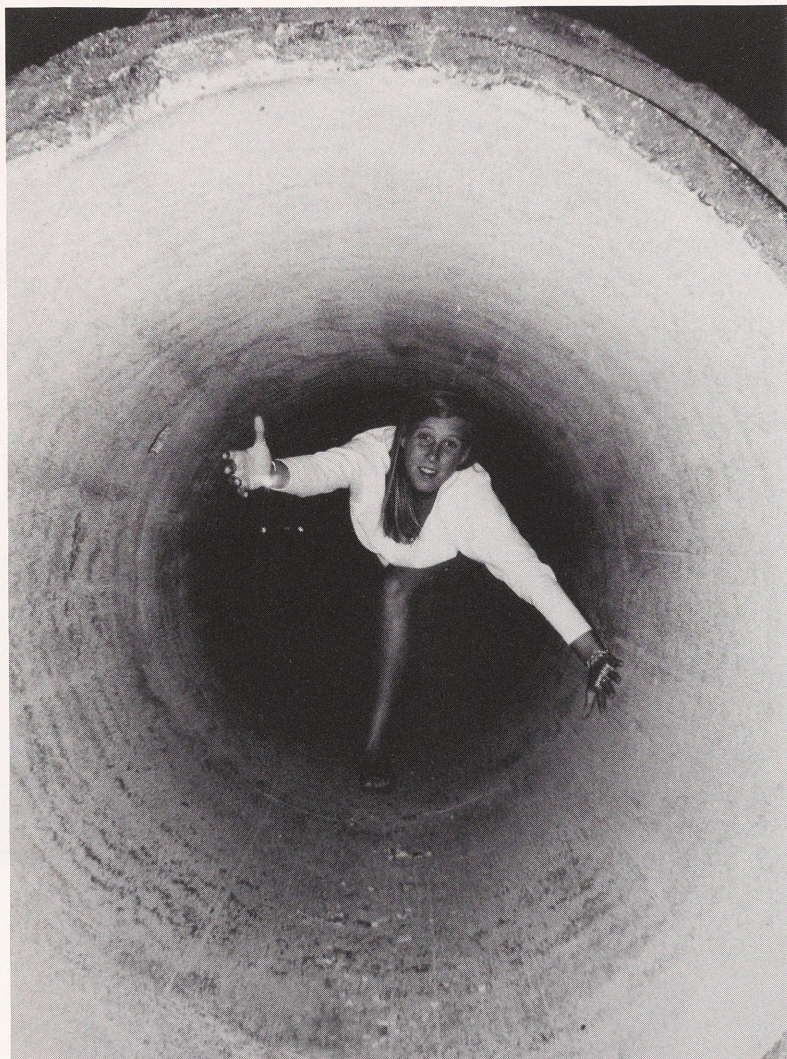
I am a little turtle
I hide inside my shell
from the world and people, hate and war,
and all that other hell.
I'm shy and peaceful, and bother no one,
like a mockingbird.
I'm always listening to other's voices,
yet I am never heard.
My shell is a protector, an opaque
shield of mine.
It keeps me walking upon life's path,
a crooked, wretched line.



And as I try so desperately to run
and hide from them
They never seem to realize that it's
from them my anger stems.
I keep running and running far away,
but it always seems too slow.
To live in a world of love and peace is
where I want to go.
Oh, Lord, please lift me from this dark
and depressing place.
For all I want to do right now is see
you face-to-face.

Langford Barksdale

Carrie LaBrec



Langford Barksdale

Thirteen

My surroundings are smaller;
I can no longer look up
To anything other than trees and clouds
And towers.
I could crush what is below me,
I could conquer you (if you submit).
I am unruly, uncontrollable—
Beyond myself.
I cannot settle in my own flesh,
I want to shrink and fade
and disappear.
But there is no escape
From the monster the child has become.

Sarah Anderson

A little boy sat
drawing at my kitchen table,
using my expensive paints;
As water dripped
on the freshly waxed floor.
Blue with sickness after

prowling nights with the owls,
stagnant,
scanning for prey, I
was ready to feed
my anger, my frustration.
He smiled.

I hung my head.
I cried.

Peeking through my hair:
His deep brown eyes—focused
and intense at work.
His hair streaked

all different colors;
all my emotions; gone.
Curiously slithering closer
to peer at the masterpiece;
my arms cradling my breast;
a vampire bat.

His cheekbones were high,
baby fat, a bit chubby.
His hands—steady with
an occasional shake,
a tremor.

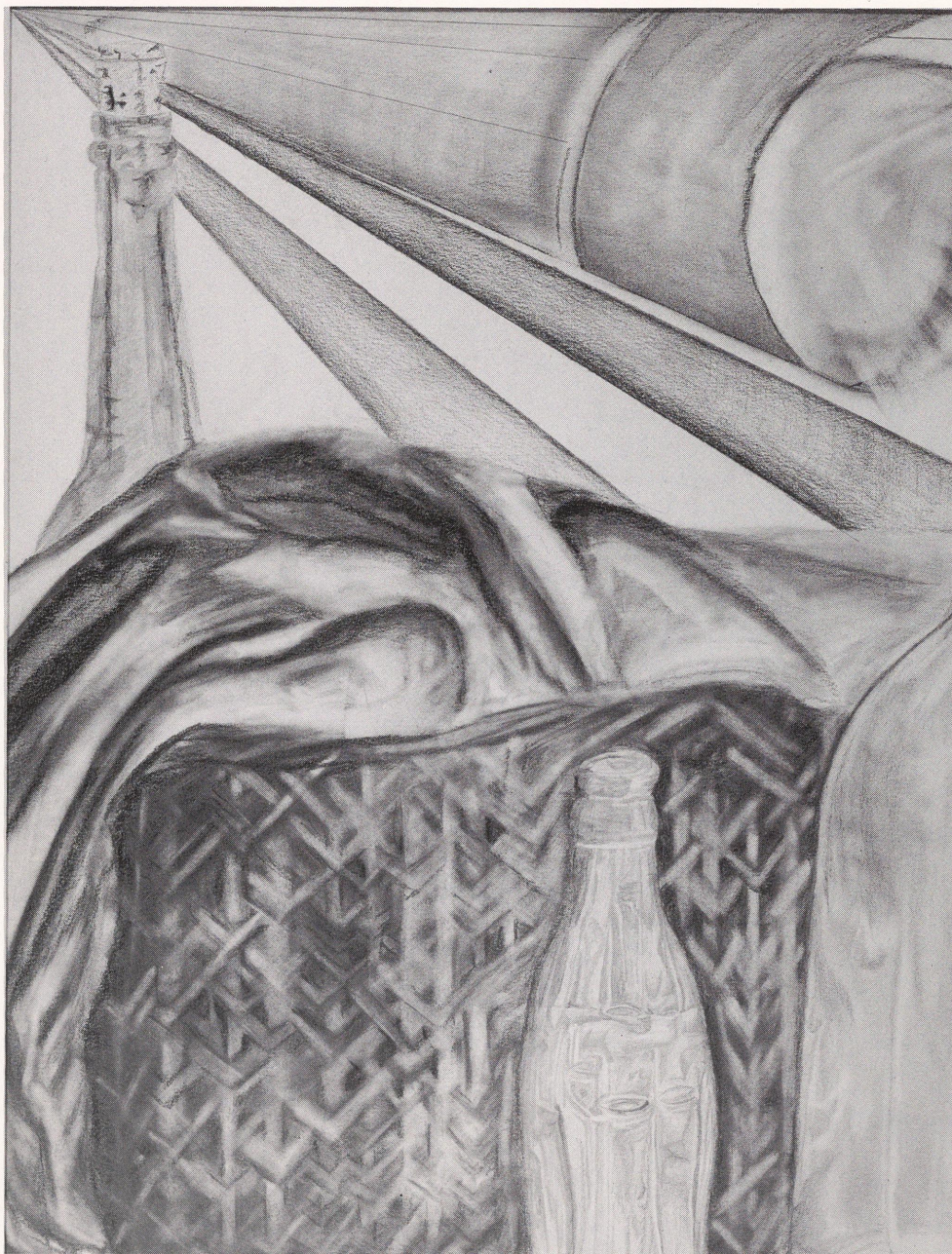
My tears had broken
the mask of dirt;
Greasy hair dripped
sweat making mud.
One drop landed on the edge
of his painting—



Jean Ellen Waugh

Vibrant colors encircled by black,
his favorite
and mine.
The black pits of his eyes,
caught a yellow light

as they flashed up at me.
Looking into my own old eyes;
I said in a harsh tone, (unintentionally)
“An eagle—
That is very pretty.”
And he said
“You have lots of pretty.”



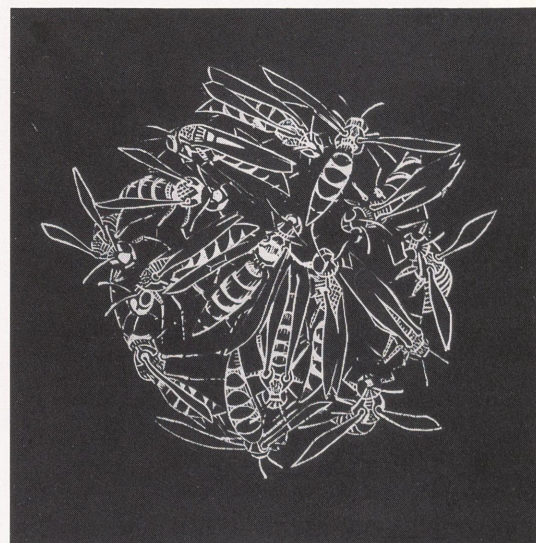
Tricia Shalibo

Let me know, Lord
 Am I wrong?
 His happiness
 my contemplation
 His question
 my grasp
 Our open hands
 look for answers.
 Let us know
 or
 Blind us from suspicion.
 We cannot bear the pain
 of uncertainty.

Mary Wallace Patrick

The Sweet Sting

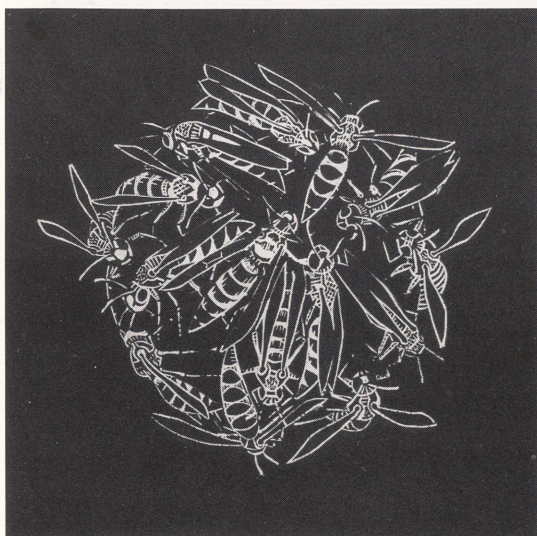
Blue and ivory bumble bees penetrate the strawberries in my
Garden with their three-inch-long stingers of silver. Now, they
Are filling their syringes with juice from the heart of the berries;
Juice that can only be found in my berries, my garden. Walking
The path lit by glowing sycamore trees, my bees greet me with
Their low-pitched moans. They encircle me as I sit in my seat of
Frozen mercury. The spikes of a dozen bees reflect the light
Of the red, green, and purple moons. I jump slightly as they inject
The juice into my neck, leaving twelve openings in my skin. My
Laughter turns to excitement when the juice intoxicates me. I live
Each day for this sugary madness that possesses my body at night.
Lying on the cold ground, I thank my bees, and slowly sink lower,
Lower, lower into the ground.



Amy Brooks

The Sting

Black and yellow bumble bees entangle themselves
In green veins of leaves and red hearts of strawberries;
Clear drops that sprouted from the silver sprinkler
Fell on the sun-baked grass, and my body shook
As I ran through the drops to the edge of the garden.
I bent down toward the strawberries and picked the biggest one.
As I brought it closer to my mouth, a sharp pain stunned me,
And the strawberry fell from my fingers to the ground.
My underarm crushed the bee. I lifted up my arm and saw
A white bump surrounded by a red circle. The bee fell,
Taking his weapon with him. I thought that he should suffer
Just as much as I did, so I yelled at him
And smeared his little body all over the bottom of my shoe.
I was satisfied that I had killed him, but I hoped
That he felt his body burst, and I wondered
If he knew that he would die, or knew that I would win.



Amy Brooks

When Brothers Have No Ears

Erich, Erich shut the door

Erich—

Lee, Lee shut the door

Lee—

When I ask questions—

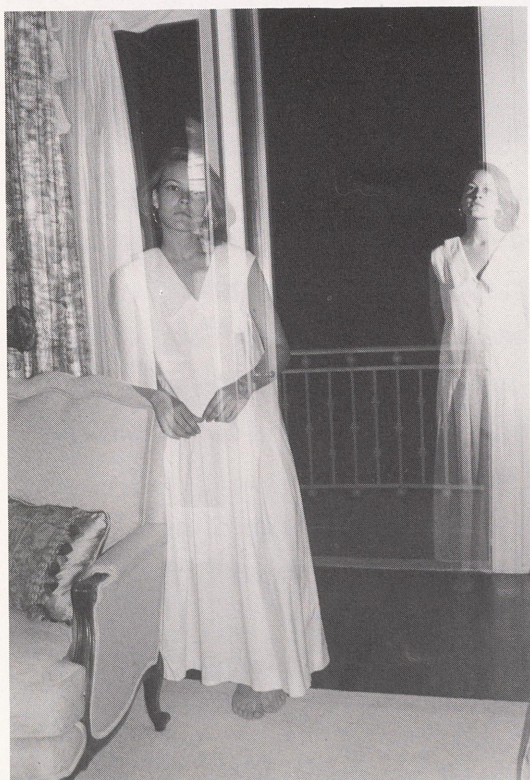
“Erich, what do you think
of the story...”

“Erich, would you push me off the roof...”

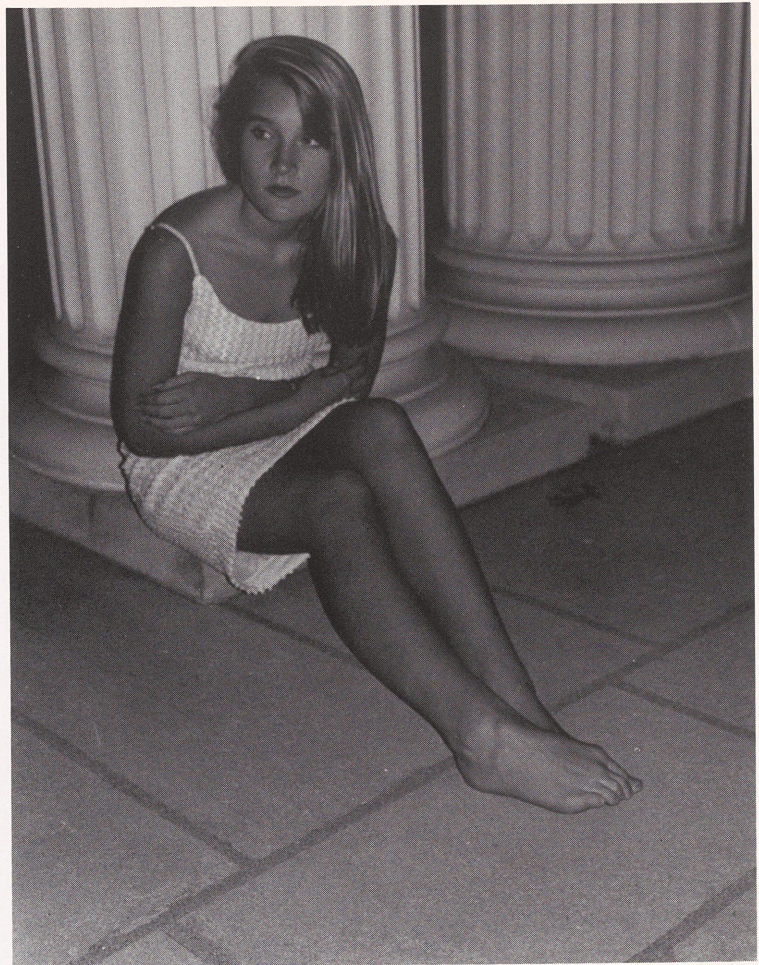
“Huh—what are you
talking about?”

To hear or not to hear!
becomes the question
I wonder if thoughts
ever rest
Between their ears

Nikol Tschaepe



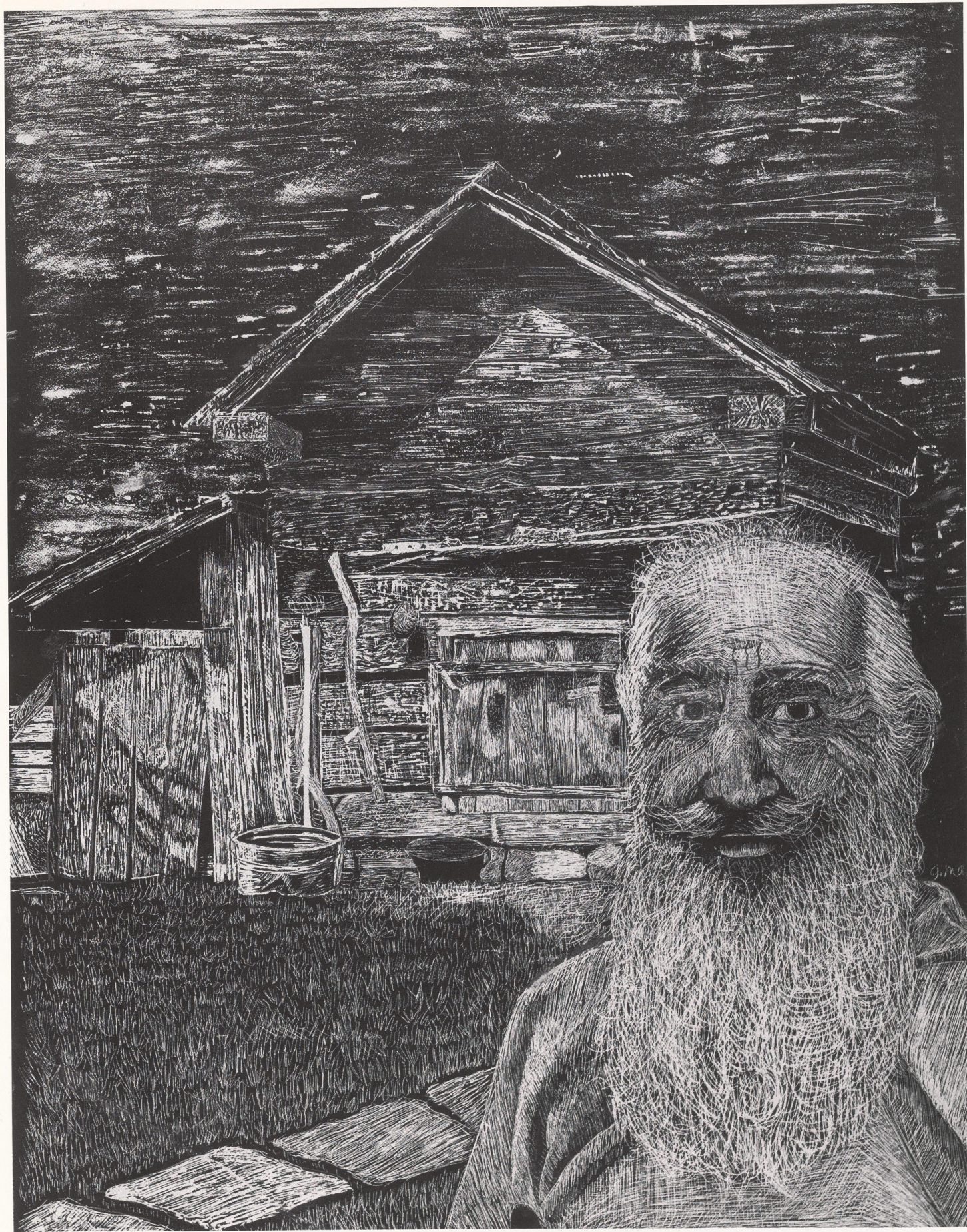
Kathy Gale Estes



Kathy Gale Estes

If I lived in a mirror
Would I be all who ever looked in me
If I lived in a mirror
Could I see the eyes, the hair, the lips
If I lived in a mirror
Could I see the pain, the joy, the pain
If I lived in a mirror
Could I know that which the people that looked at me knew
If I lived in a mirror
Could I have felt every emotion a person felt
If I lived in a mirror
Could I see the soul
If I lived in a mirror
What two realities would I be between
If I lived in a mirror
What two fantasies would I be between
If I lived in a mirror
And no one ever looked in at me to see themselves
Would I really be living at all

Heather Hodde



Ginna Maxwell

Hatred

All my links to the past are gone, destroyed by someone whom I did not know and who did not know me. But still he hated me, not for the person I am or the things I have done, but for what I believed in. My memories of the past are non-existent, and my memories of the present are hindered by the shadows of hatred.

I do not know anything about my great-grandparents or other relatives of that generation; the memories are too painful for my grandparents to recall. I have no pictures of my great-grandparents or my grandparents when they were young. I try to imagine what their lives were like then, but imagining is hard to do without visual images or stories. All I see when I try to imagine their past is the death and destruction of the camps, which my grandparents survived, but in which my great-grandparents were killed.

I struggle with myself, trying to stop the hatred from pouring out of my body. I know it is not right for me to hate a people when not all were responsible for my loss; but how can I not hate, when they systematically murdered my people because of their religion? How can I have a positive feeling toward a people who have altered my life by destroying all my would-be memories of those who share my name? I can not.

Naomi Limor

Part of the Desert

This poem is a tribute to the soldiers who were involved in Desert Storm, the war against Iraq, and my friend, Michael Moore.

Patrolling the borders,
Surrounded by sand.
Lives of your unit
Held in your hand.

Sand-storming winds
Slashing your face.
Your only thought,
To get out of this place

When you are tired
And facing the sun,
Try to remember
"These colors don't run."

Ruffin Priest



Definition of Desire

You give me a sweet taste,
and back away as I reach for more.
I am stretching myself out to meet you
and as I arrive you disappear.
You're the only drop of water that falls upon
my tongue in my deepest thirst.
You're the sun that colors my face for a second
then hides behind clouds.
Every moment with you is a plea for
more sunlight on my chilled body,
more water to my tongue,
more food for my empty spirit.
Every desire is quenched
in your arms,
in your eyes,
in your words.
But I am never overfilled.
You keep your offerings in reserve,
allowing me to take small tastes of your love,
nothing in excess.
The definition of sustained desire.

In the Realms of Glass

She couldn't crawl fast enough to escape his hands as they trapped her. She scurried with all eight legs to the left, then to the right; his hand followed with the glass jar hovering above. She froze in the grass, hoping that her shiny black body and outstretched legs would blend within the green. The jar's rim slid beneath her two front legs in an effort to capture, but not harm, her. She jumped backward, looking for an escape, and there was no direction to freedom. As her body was lifted into the jar, she saw the world through the glazed thickness of glass for the first time. The metallic lid to the milk jar was hammered in place by the palm of the same hand that had encaged her.

Her fragile body was so frantic she raced around the bottom of the glass pit endlessly. She felt the pounding of a nail above, as it punctured the aluminum lid to allow her oxygen.

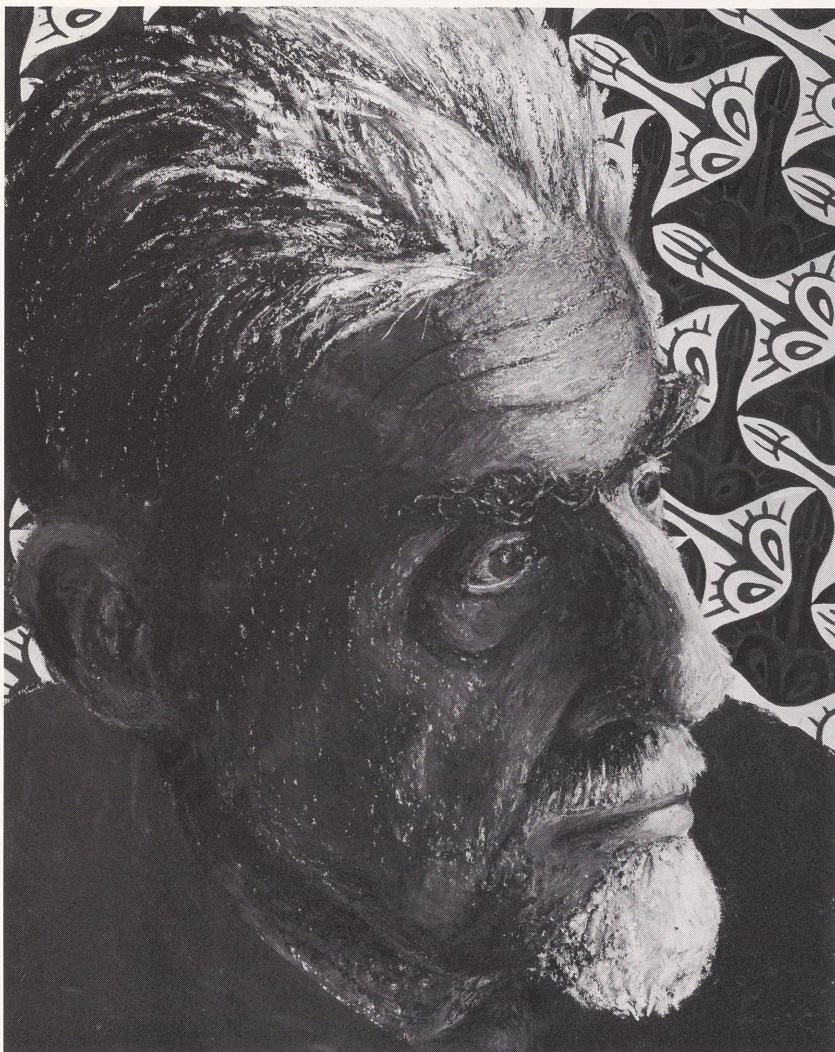
Her slender legs grasped for the slippery walls of glass to lift her weakened body. She made no progress.

She has now fallen prey to the transparent web of her captor. She rests at the bottom of the jar with her eyes upon a crimson reflection of the hourglass upon her stomach. She painfully realizes the sand is running out, and adapts herself to a new life in the realms of glass.

Jessica Lovett



Yoko Ichikawa



Julia Harrison

Jim

The man looked up at me
“Today I heard my eulogy.”

I laughed, ignoring him
He said his name was Jim

I didn’t know what to say
It was odd — in a way

I really wanted to go
My discomfort started to show

Placing his hand on my arm
He saw no reason for my alarm

“The doctor said cancer — in my lung
I decided it better to be hung.”

His fingers traced along the line
“I did it with some sort of twine.”

I closed my eyes tight
Looking again, he was out of sight.

Joelle Herr



Langford Barksdale

Elders

As I stepped onto the huge steel bird I pressed my damp palm against its cold armor. I thought to myself, "In twenty minutes this huge metal machine will be gliding through the air seemingly without effort..." I handed my boarding pass to the flight attendant. "Linda" ripped it in half and gave it back to me with a fastened, weary smile. That's her job—to smile. I shifted my heavy bag on my shoulder and started down the narrow aisle to 15-F. I was relieved to find it to be a window seat.

I shoved my bag under the seat in front of me and sat to survey the other passengers struggling down the aisle with their burdensome luggage. An older woman with bleached-blond hair and faded make-up, comforted at the sight of her resting place, crowded her bag into the overhead compartment and heavily sat down beside me. She was a somewhat overweight woman with cloudy blue eyes and thin painted lips. I could tell by her blaring, raspy voice that she had smoked for several years. She wore dark blue polyester pants and pastel striped t-shirt. I imagined she must have been attractive in a showy way when she was younger. Her name was Shirley, she told me. She was from Columbus and on her way to Fort Worth to visit her children for Thanksgiving.

A middle-aged man in a business suit interrupted our conversation, "What's your seat number?" he asked me. I suddenly felt frightened for an unknown and yet contemptable deed. "15-F," I answered timidly. "Are you sure?...Mine says 15-F too." "It figures," said the gaudy woman, "they always overbook these damn things..'" "Yeah, 15-F." I said as I re-read my ticket. The man sighed as he called a flight attendant to our seat and explained the problem. "Ron" smiled too, yet his smile was less weary—much younger than "Linda's."

The thing I wanted least at that moment in my life was to change seats. I was comfortable where I was and I dreaded the idea of having to chance sitting next to a raving lunatic for the four-hour flight.

After five minutes of bickering I finally bowed to my "elder" and let the man take my seat. The fact that I had folded angered me and with further thought I grew infuriated with myself. I gathered my weighty bag and followed "Ron" toward the front of the plane. I clenched my teeth as I walked down the crowded aisle—trying to manage my bag. "Ron" continued down the aisle—at one point I was convinced he had forgotten I was following him. We passed through the curtain dividers into the first-class section. A revenging grin smothered my face as "Ron" pointed to an empty seat next to the window.

"Where are the pickles, Mom?"

"They're on the table, honey."

"O, thanks."

I sat down at the little wooden table in our kitchen with my hamburger in front of me. The song for "The Fresh Prince of Belair" was playing in the back of my mind as well as on the T.V. I reached for the jar of pickles and sat staring at it.

"How did this pickle get in this jar?" I could hear the explicit words of my pre-first teacher, Mrs. Hempel, ask us as we sat bewildered, looking innocently at the mysterious pickle. The small, wondering eyes watched the teacher as she walked by, holding the jar for us to see. No one knew the answer, and she kept the secret until the end of the year.

We had to wait the whole year to find out the response to that ever-annoying question. Through drawing our self-portraits with Dr. Jones, to reading all about Sam and Ann, we waited. Through recess every day, through drilling nails into wood, through wearing our tiger faces, we waited.

Many times I would sit alone and stare at that pickle. The jar was about ten inches tall and had developed into a slightly dirty, but still transparent glass container, probably an old Hellman's jar. The pickle itself was wide, too wide to have been pushed forcefully through the small opening of the jar. A dark tint of green, but not exactly hunter, the pickle stood leaning against the jar's cold walls. It looked as if it was tired of all the eyes that stared at it, so it used the wall as it's support; the wall and the pickle were best friends. I always longed to touch the pickle and feel it's tiny bumps, but even my small hands could not fit in the small opening, the only link to the pickle besides sight. I guessed that the pickle liked to bathe in the water painted lightly green, and it was okay that we didn't have everything in common.

Many ideas went through my inexperienced brain, but none that I can remember were correct to solve the problem. I thought that perhaps someone had molded the jar around the pickle or perhaps the seed was grown in that jar, but my ingenious brain could not pull the pieces of the puzzle together. As I sat there wondering about the pickle's life meaning, I grew up. Ten years had gone by, and I was still asking how? and why? questions about life. It seemed that everything had changed since then, but really many things were the same, still asking the same questions that can't be answered, still wondering.

"Aren't you hungry, dear?" my mother asked innocently, and I guess that she was lucky enough to have already discovered the meaning of life.

Varina Buntin



Tricia Shalibo

Underneath

I look through a sea of branches from under a lightening-struck tree. Her bark, cracked and withering, falls away in jagged sheets. Dashes of grey lichen—summer's abundant snowflakes—give her a wise and dignified air despite the humility of death. Her fragile and stubborn arms reach out for a neighboring tree, and though they never touch her, his velvet arms offer a flawless illusion of the best of comforting hugs. Her protection, an endless army of green leaves, allows not even a battalion to remain in memory. All are forgotten—their green coats turned red as their brittle lives float quietly down to kneel at her feet. Piercing the lazy sky is a severe and menacing cut in the flawed wooden queen. Her steadfast pride leaves her awkward and blind to the other trees who mock her. Her drained strength will soon abandon her and leave her deserted kingdom to fall lifelessly to the ground through nature's forgotten history.

Jennifer Spinella

EOS

I, the rosy-fingered goddess
draw back the night curtain
spreading the morning light of dawn
making way for father's
chariot to burn across
the sky.

Dressed in saffron-robe
I descend to my couch
near the Ocean stream
to recall the time—

Rage of Aphrodite
Finding Ares in bed with me.
The cuse—
Perpetual love of young mortals.

Shuddering, at my remembrance of
Tithonus.
Asking, immortality of him
Forgetting, immortal youth.

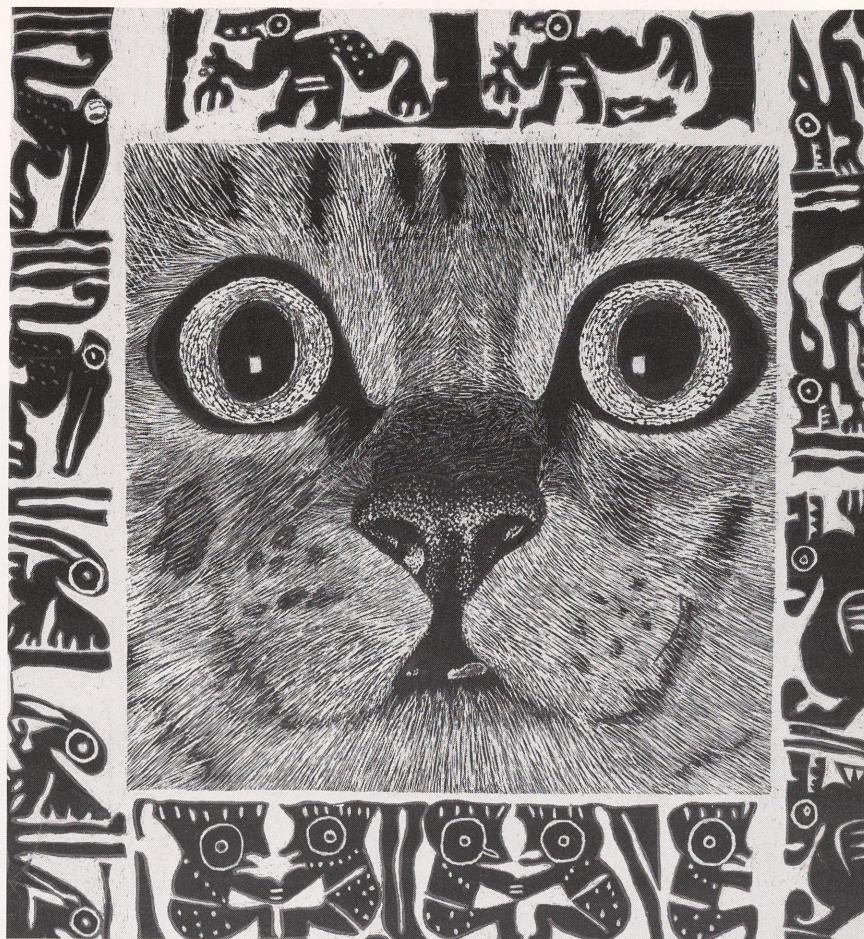
Horried at his last years,
Bones covered with loose skin,
Voice: soft, sad, and small.

Shutting him up in a
Splendid cave—still
hearing that horrible voice

I turned him into a grasshopper.
Reminding the immortals
Reminding the ages to come.



Kathy Gale Estes



Amy Brooks

Release

Her tough and calloused feet take even steps down the platform. She peeks over the edge just enough to get a glimpse of the water five meters below. She takes three steps back along the platform and turns around. She centers herself; she pictures herself walking down the platform, jumping up, landing back down and leaping off, heading straight down toward a depth of twelve feet.

All the years of practice culminate in this last dive. She has to get a 9.5 from the judges to be a “winner” in her own eyes.

She steps forward—three gliding steps; up and down her body goes as she re-plants herself on the board before leaving it to sail through the air. Her form is exquisite and she knows it. Chin outstretched, arms spread wide, legs straight and pointed, she looks like a paper airplane as it is carried by a gust of wind downward. Her body falls gracefully as she continues to hold her form.

Slice!

The water opens to accept her sharply pointed body. As she pierces the water, a smile spreads across her face. She knows she has achieved her goal. Under water she rejoices in her triumph. She has made it to the top. As she slowly rises through the water, she prepares herself for the awaiting crowd. In her greatest moment of triumph, she thinks back to the top of the platform. And puts her hand to her stomach and takes a deep breath to shut off the anxiety so that it won't intrude on her moment of triumph.



Bethany Ragsdale

Reality

The mask is gone
the Truth revealed
the curtain torn
the Love repealed

The heart is severed
the contents drained
the smile so clever
the Liberty chained

The Soul is betrayed
the Hate confessed
the emotions relayed
the disgust undressed

The Rose is wilted
the Sun unveiled
the sight is tilted
the Path derailed

The Mask is torn
the Truth repealed
the Curtain gone
the Love congealed

Joelle Herr

God's Night Air

As your contemporaries slip into their nocturnal slumbers,
a new existence is unveiled before your tiring eyes.

The crackling fire, rushing water, chirping crickets, wind rustled leaves,
and your companions' past laughter ringing through the trees
conglomerates into an awesome silence.

A world full of life has halted on its axis, leaving only you
to experience what this void in time has to offer.

The rocky slope upon which you put your head to rest has now become
a billowing cloud which lifts your soul high into the night
for you to reflect upon life's mysteries

As your weary eyes come to a close - you feel a warm sensation
because your mind has given you the greatest gift in the world -
A journey through God's night air.

Noni Nielson



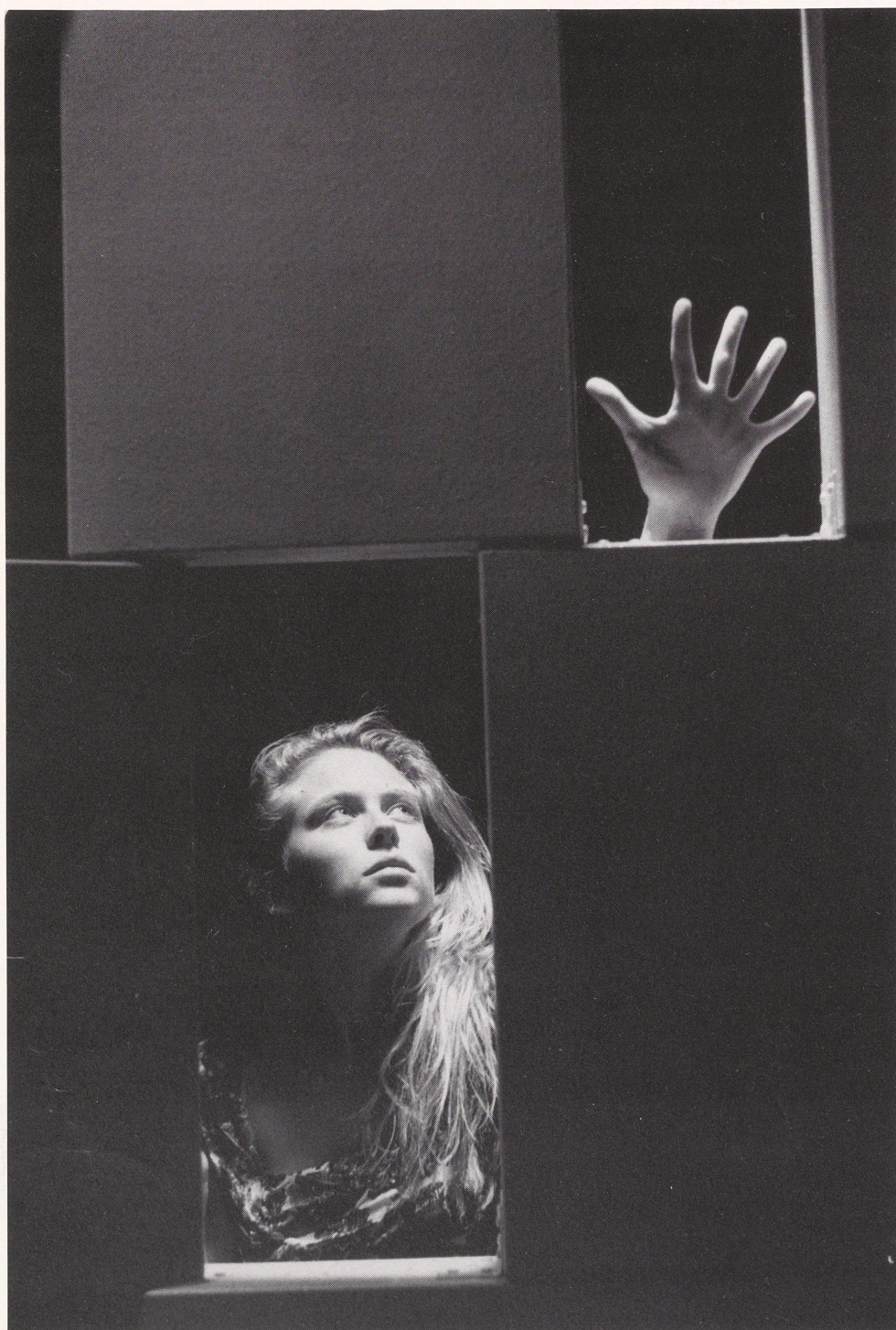
Jessica Lovett

The Lips speak of nothing,
and the world was left silent.
The Mind speaks to itself,
and the earth was left empty.
The Soul speaks of pain,
and the sky was left alone.
The Eyes speak of truth,
and I was left lifeless.

Beth Amond



Langford Barksdale



Jessica Lovett

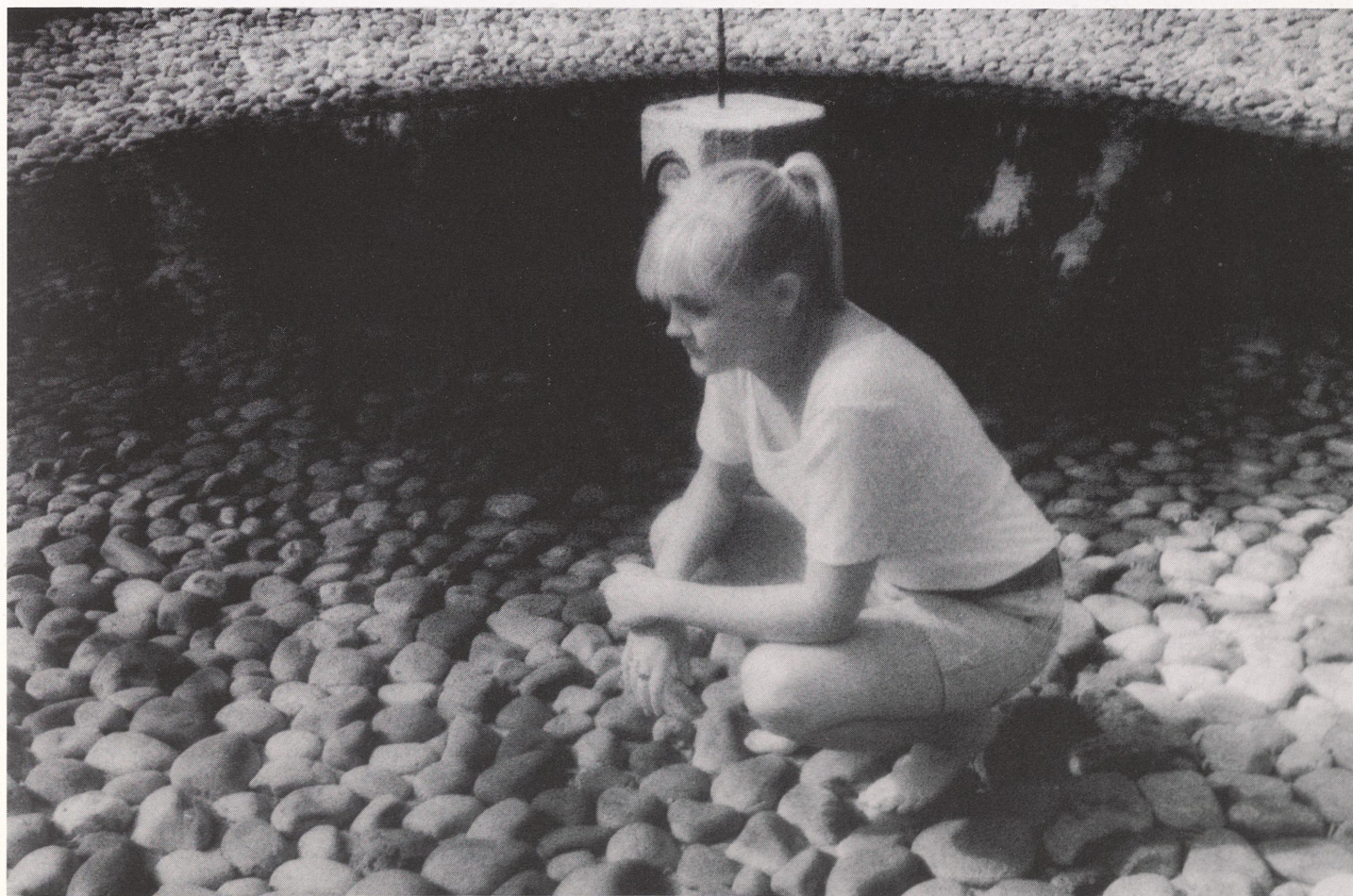
Sight leaves you blind;
It is those who live in the dark
that see the everlasting light.

Beth Amond

Decomposition

a second gone by
a minute gone by
an hour, a day—
escaping from the grasp of the future
to the pit of a memory.
a week,
a month,
a year gone by—
descending further and deeper into the darkness
blending sacred and meaningless moments
to a faint blur.
a lifetime gone by—
left to rot and suffocate
in the Earth, Herself,
to Whom a lifetime
is but a second.

Joelle Herr



Langford Barksdale

Children

Look to the children for happiness
People say they smile
the smile of true happiness
To them children have no problems
No one takes time to notice
These children have hearts also
But the heart of a child weeps
with greater sorrow than
any adult could ever know
Though they were once children
They have now forgotten the torment
So look to the children
Not to receive happiness
But to give love.



She watches me.
She sees in me the good of her union.
She hopes for me a better one.

At a time too late for her to change
She molds in me her unrealized dreams
Hoping that I will learn from her mistakes
And also re-create her happiness.

I am a part of her.
Some day, though, I will become her.
I will watch my own daughter
Grow up and become a better me.

Alexis Reed

At the Sunset's Level

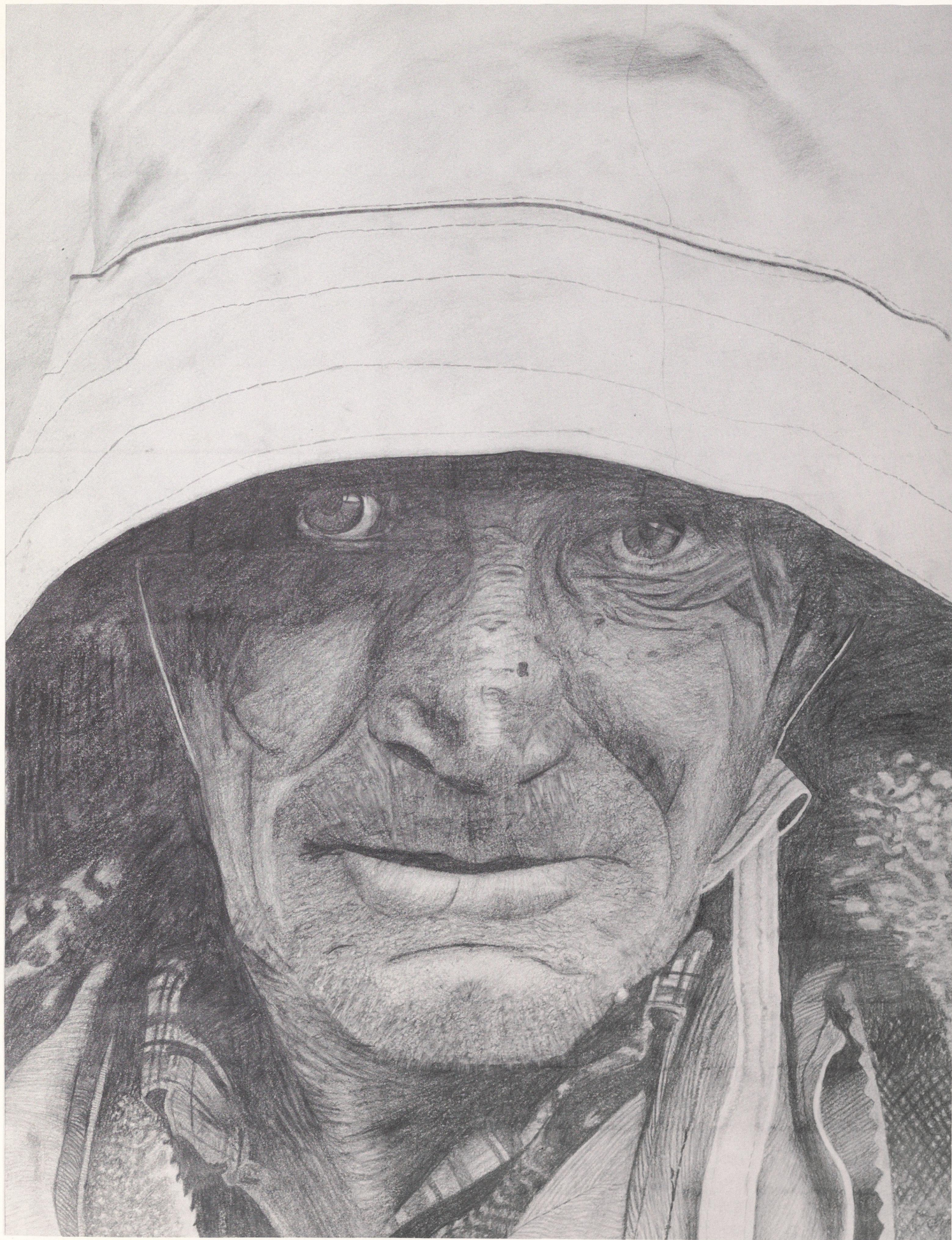
I'm looking across at what looks like snow. Behind me is the pure white nobody dares step on. This white sheet has few bulges where something has been covered up only to make a bump out of what could have been a house. Only you do not have houses up in the sky; only clouds. As I look closer to me I see more of a blue color, which typically resembles sky. The clouds here are perfectly shaped into nothing to an adult and anything to a child. Through the blue tint and closer to the earth are slender streets that sneak by various houses and buildings, and whose narrow branches of grey lines prove a lack of trees by distinct edges. As the moon brightens up above, down below is shadowed by a feeling of night. There is not a full moon by any means; half of it is too greedy to share itself with the world tonight. The air is lonely now. Few clouds play with the vast grey sky and brilliant moon. Only a slither of pink makes an attempt for joyful color play but is refused by the sky and surrounded up above. The clouds are now discolored and separated. Only the moon now braves to lighten the earth. The slither of pink falls behind me, more wild than ever, daring to be the contrast of every blue, grey, and white but has now left me far ahead and her behind. Men, women, and children down below have given up on the sky and now use unnatural light I would never dare speak of in comparison to the truly awesome resources of God.

Beth Geddie

I remember that night back in 1912, although I don't like talking about it much. Steve, my nineteen year old brother, was on the Titanic with me and we were going to visit Grandmother Hampton. She was living in New York at the time, and we had just sent her a wire before we got on the ship. We were enjoying everything on it. They had a neat little Parisien Cafe and a smoking room that Steve visited often. Anyway, on the night of the fourteenth, I think it was a Tuesday, I was enjoying a drink with a man I met — John ... John Walston was his name, I think. The band was playing wonderful ragtime music and we were dancing under those bright stars. I recall that it was quite cold out there. It seemed like we were the only ones on the ocean - it was a beautiful night. Well, at least, to begin with, anyway. I remember that I saw Steve in the distance walking over to us with a distraught look on his face. Right then, the ship tilted upward a bit and Steve, in his evening suit, took me by the arm and told me to come with him. He said that the ship had hit an iceberg and that all the women and children were to board the lifeboats immediately.

Men were scurrying around everywhere trying to get their loved ones to safety. At first, I didn't really think that we had hit an iceberg, but when the ship tilted to a frightening angle, I decided to head for the lifeboats. Women were crying when they realized that their husbands and sons weren't allowed to go with them. I turned to Steve and told him that I couldn't let him stay on that ship. I started crying and wouldn't let go of his jacket. The crewmen started yelling at me to hurry up and get on, but I just couldn't do it. They finally got enough people to fill it, so they started lowering it down a ways. I was still clinging to Steve when he said, "You'll thank me for this later. Much later. I love you so much. I'm sorry." He pushed me over the edge of the ship, and I landed in the life boat which was about ten feet down. As I looked up, all I could see was ashen, tear-stained face lit against the white lights of the ship. When we were farther away from it, all I could think of was my drowning brother and what strength he had to save my life. I spotted six other lifeboats around ours, all filled with shaking bodies, our eyes on the calming water.

Amy Brooks



Amy Brooks



